

The title of my talk, as Linda said, is "The Power of the NIEHS Extramural Program." And, in thinking of titles and topics and how I was going to talk to you today about them, myriad of experiences I have had and our division has had, I thought a little bit more about a question that I was asked to me by the search committee. Someone asked me what my relationship had been, or how it was going with our new director, and what I saw my role as acting division director for extramural. There were two parts to that answer. One was that I said that given that I came onboard in this job one month before she did, I thought it was my responsibility to teach her about the mechanisms and the thought process -- the process part of extramural science and how we get our work done. Our director had not had a lot of experience in the extramural community, and so I knew it was going to be a steep learning curve, and I knew that the division had a lot to offer in terms of that information. And then the second thing I said was, that I thought it was really important as the director of the division to impart information about how powerful our extramural community is and how there was a lot of power in our relationships in the community, in the work that they do, and how we as an institute should embrace that power and use it to the benefit of the institute. And so, that seemed to resonate some with the committee, and there were some follow-up questions about that, about what I really meant by "power", and what I thought the most powerful aspects of the portfolio were. So, I gave some pretty cursory answers at the time. I didn't have that much time to go into it, but over the last few weeks I really spent a lot more time thinking about how powerful a program it is, how powerful a division we are, and how there are some unique opportunities and challenges for the division for the future, and I want to share that with you today.